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## The Practice of Authentic Assessment in an EFL Speaking Classroom

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### Abstract

*The implementation of Curriculum 2013 has inserted the authentic assessment as the measurement method to evaluate students' learning objectives and achievements in the classroom. In this curriculum, the application of authentic assessment requires teachers to evaluate students' in three competencies: attitude, knowledge, and skill. Most teachers claim that speaking is the most difficult skill to be assessed by using the authentic assessment, considering the complex features of the assessment. This research was aimed at describing the application of authentic assessment in a speaking classroom which relates to the types of the assessment and the scoring rubric. The subjects of the study were an English teacher and 28 students of a class at one of the junior high schools in Banda Aceh. Under the descriptive qualitative approach umbrella, the data in this study was obtained from observation and document analysis. The results of the study revealed that the teacher used several types of activities to assess students' speaking skills: (1) attitude assessment (teacher observation), (2) knowledge assessment (teacher interview/short answer question), and (3) skill assessment (narrating sequences). The result of this study indicates that authentic assessment is a feasible way to assess students' speaking skill and it should be employed in assessing other skills as well for learning languages.*

**Keywords:** Authentic assessment, speaking skill, Curriculum 2013.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The success of learning English can only be achieved should the students be able to perform the language task assigned and master the language competences targeted. The success is not only seen from the results achieved, but it is also evaluated from the process of learning. Evaluating students' achievement at the middle or the end of the semester is said as the traditional ways of assessments. Teachers give tests and papers to examine students' understanding of the topics taught. This kind of assessment interprets the success of learning from the score achieved. In the meantime, evaluating students' achievement from the process of learning is seen as an alternative assessment which can provide opportunities for students to enhance their competences in continued learning. It is an evaluation process that consists of various forms of performance measurement that illustrates a student's achievement, motivation, and attitudes toward instructional activities according to instruction (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). The results of this assessment model are used to adapt teaching to meet students' needs (Black & Wiliam, 1998). The latter kind of assessment refers to authentic assessment.

The concepts of authentic assessment have been embraced enthusiastically by policy makers, curriculum developers, and practitioners alike, and enshrined in the literature of curriculum and assessment as a desirable characteristic of education (Cumming & Maxwell, 1999). This enthusiasm also leads the Education Ministry of Indonesia to insert the authentic assessment as the way to directly measure students' skills and knowledge which emphasize on practical and authentic tasks. The implementation of Curriculum 2013 has become the point of departure of the application of the authentic assessment in the curriculum. This curriculum demands teachers to implement authentic assessment as a tool to monitor the students' progress in mastering language skills in the classroom. This new type of assessment is considered as a solution that can accommodate students' progress and achievement in the classroom (Sahyoni & Zaim, 2017).

In many classroom situations, speaking seems to be one of though skills to be mastered. The real-time processing type makes it even more challenging to be assessed. Once students produce the language, teachers have to be able to record and note the strengths and weaknesses of students' language sample production at that time. The implementation of authentic assessment in Curriculum 2013 obliges teachers to take into account the real-time assessment in the speaking classroom. Even though the demand is imperative, there is less investigation on the implementation of authentic assessment in the speaking classroom. Whether the teachers understand or not on how to assess students' works in the speaking classroom by using authentic assessment is open to doubt. The dearth of investigation about the factual condition of the authentic assessment implementation in the speaking classroom, particularly in junior high schools in Aceh, becomes the researchers' motivation to deeply explore to what extent the authentic assessment implemented in the speaking classroom in Aceh. It, then, broke down into the following research questions:

1. How is the authentic assessment for speaking skill implemented by the English teacher related to the type of the assessment?
2. How is the authentic assessment for speaking skill implemented by the English teacher related to the type of the scoring rubric constructed by the teacher?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Speaking Skill

Fulcher (2003) said that speaking is the verbal use of language to communicate with others. The productive oral skill that includes conveying meaning through producing verbal utterances systematically (Bailey, 2008). The meaning of the words uttered by the speaker is dependent on the speaker, listener, and context. Meanwhile, in defining speaking Burns and Joyce (1997) assert that it is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information. Its form and meaning depend on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking. It, thus, can be understood that speaking is the process of conveying ideas, opinions, or feelings to others by using words or sounds of articulation in order to inform, to persuade, and to entertain the listener.

The Curriculum 2013 syllabus guideline demands teachers in junior high schools to able to assess three speaking competencies (Depdiknas, 2014). The first is linguistic competence. The linguistic competence urges students to use grammar accurately, possess adequate vocabulary, and clear pronunciation. It also requires students to understand which words they should use to express their ideas and how to put them into phrases and sentences. The second is functional competence. Functional competence refers to the ability to accomplish communication purposes in a language. In junior high school levels, the communication purpose is students' ability to answer the question completely and logically. The last is sociolinguistic/cultural competence that knows how to use and respond to language appropriately, given the setting, the topic, and the relationships among the people communicating. The sociolinguistic competence makes students able to contextualize words and phrases to fit certain setting and topic, know how and when to express a specific attitude (courtesy, authority, friendliness, respect) and able to acknowledge what attitude other person is expressing.

### 2.2 Authentic Assessment

Wiggins (1993) describes authentic assessment as tasks and procedures in which students are engaged in applying skills and knowledge to solve 'real- world' problems, giving the tasks a sense of authenticity. It is a kind of recent assessment method employed by teachers who aim to describe students' achievement and needs authentically in the teaching-learning process. Authentic assessment displays the implementation of students' certain skills and judgment and dwells more on problem-solving, comprehension, critical thinking, reasoning, and metacognition (Kinay & Bagececi, 2016). It can help teachers to diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses, as well as to reflect on strategies effectively applied in the classroom.

There are two major reasons why authentic assessment can be utilized as one of the assessment methods in Curriculum 2013. First, the previous or current assessment does not assess and include all students' outcomes. The assessment tends to rank the students based on the scores. The form of assessment cannot represent authentic representations of classroom activities related to students' interest and motivation during the instruction process (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). Second is that teachers can plan the instructional activities based on the recent issues or information obtained in

the classroom. The outcomes of real tasks assigned in the authentic assessment provide meaningful information about students' state of knowledge and skill. The information can be a relevant source for teachers to adjust their instructional activities during the learning process in the classroom.

Assessments of speaking should focus on students' ability to interpret and convey meanings for authentic purpose in interactive context (Rukmini & Saputri, 2017). Gulikers et al. (2004) propose a five-dimensional framework for authentic assessment; the framework consists of the authenticity of the task, physical context, social context, form, and criteria. An authentic task is a problem task that confronts students with activities which integrate the knowledge, skills, and attitude. It explains that in designing the task, the teacher should consider those aspects as the parameters. Next is the physical context. The physical context refers to the environment or situation in which students have to perform the assessment task (Gulikers et al., 2006). The assessment should be conducted in a situation which represents the real-life situation. The experience of completing the assigned tasks will reflect their ability in using the language in a real-life situation. The third is social context. In designing the assessment, teachers should take into account the social situation of students' life including the culture and community. What is really important in an authentic assessment is that the social processes of the assessment resemble the social processes in an equivalent situation in reality. Assessment result or form is the next element in the framework. The result of the assessment is said as the output of the assessment task (Gulikers, 2006). The output should be able to be used in real-life situations. The last is the assessment criteria. The assessment criteria are characteristics of the performance that are valued (Gulikers et al., 2006). It is used to score students' performances in order to stimulate them to learn (Idham et al., 2015).

According to O'Malley and Pierce (1996, p. 11), there are several types of authentic assessment for speaking skills that can be used to assess and monitor students' progress of learning. First of all, is the oral interview or also called as short questions and answers. The oral interview is one of the authentic assessment types conducted by teachers by asking students simple information questions about related topics. The teachers set and ask students questions. This kind of activities can encourage students to start speaking. It also can help students to build their confidence in producing the language orally. Second is storytelling. In this type of activities, students are asked to retell the story/events in correct orders. This activity needs higher logical thinking. The students need to listen or read. They process the information before they retell the story. For students with low English proficiency, this activity can be modified by supplying a series of pictures for the students. The example of the variations for this activity is a picture-cued description or stories and narrating sequences (Sahyoni & Zaim, 2017). In this kind of activities, students are given a series of pictures and prompts. The pictures are taken from the stories of real people. The students generate the stories from the pictures and the prompts set by teachers. After completing the stories, teachers ask students to describe or tell a story about pictures of real people.

The third is the information gap activity. In information gap activity, teachers can use many kinds of media such as pictures, photo, diagram, or map. The teachers distribute a series of incomplete pictures to students. Students are asked to speak with their friends in order to collect missing information. While working in pairs, the students are also using the target language. It, thus, can help develop interactions

among the students (McKay, 2006, p. 206). The students retell stories or text selections that they have listened to or read.

The last is role-play. The role-play is one of the interesting and fun activity which can promote interactions in the classroom. In role plays, teachers can assign distinct roles to each student and ask them to speak through these roles. The teachers can plan and select the situations and encourage the students to act as in the real situation. This activity has appealed to students because it encourages students to be creative and to put themselves in another person's place for a while situation (Sahyoni & Zaim, 2017).

### 2.3 Scoring Rubric

In measuring students' level of skill and ability, teachers typically use rubrics. The rubrics can be used for scoring students' language ability or for giving students feedback on their progress or achievement in learning those language abilities (Brown, 2012). There are two types of rubrics commonly used to assess students' oral skill: an analytic rubric and holistic rubric. The holistic rubric is said as a general rubric for rating students' oral skill. It only provides one particular score representing students' language ability. Meanwhile, the analytic scoring rubric divides students' language ability into different aspects. Each aspect is rating accordingly to the level of the ability. For example, in assessing the oral language, the aspects are divided based on the subskill tested, i.e. pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and vocabulary.

Choate and Evans (1992), as cited in Sahyoni and Zaim (2017), said that there are several purposes of authentic assessment. First, authentic assessment gives multiple opportunities for students to perform their performance or work. In authentic assessment, students are evaluated in many different forms of tasks, both written and spoken and scoring systems. The tasks offer numerous chances for students to show their progress in learning. Second, it gives instructional time. It is often that the assessment is conducted at the end of the learning session. In authentic assessment, the evaluation can be carried out while the process of teaching-learning happens. It saves time. It, thus, help teachers in managing the time allocation for the teaching-learning process. The third purpose is teachers can give an assessment that is related directly to the teaching objectives. Before conducting the assessment, teachers need to consult the syllabus guidelines in formulating the learning objectives. In this way, the teachers can plan kinds of activities which precisely measure the objectives. Later, authentic assessments give direct instruction in a real and relevant task. Tasks designed in the assessments have to be as authentic as possible to the real situation. Students are trained to solve problems related to the situations/events that happen in real life. The fifth purpose is it gives students to know their self-ability towards the material. One of the authentic assessment types is self-assessment. In self-assessment, students can learn to diagnose their strengths and weaknesses in learning the language. They also can gradually check their progress in learning the language.

In order to carry out an effective authentic assessment as suggested by Curriculum 2013, teachers must fully understand the objectives to be achieved. Teachers should be able to differentiate the three scopes of authentic assessment in Curriculum 2013. First is attitude assessment. In the attitude assessment, teachers conduct observations towards students' social and religious aspect. During the assessment process, teachers observe the social and spiritual attitudes of students. Also, teachers take into account the way students interact with their peers and teachers. Second is knowledge assessments. The knowledge aspects (cognitive) consists of two



kinds of assessment; a written test and oral test. In this phase, the students are tested about the content area of the skill. The last is skill assessments. The skill assessment is also called as the psychomotor aspect. This competency measures the students' language skills, listening, reading, speaking, and writing. In this aspect, teachers assess students' participation in using knowledge/language. Using this information, teachers can give them feedback on students' performance in narrative forms or class reports.

### **3. METHODS**

This study was undertaken by using a descriptive qualitative approach. [Ary \(2006\)](#) states that qualitative research focuses on understanding social phenomena from the perspective of the human participants in the study. In descriptive research, the data gathered are words, pictures, and no calculation ([Moleong, 2007](#)). The present research aims to describe the practice of authentic assessment in a speaking classroom. It focuses on the application of types of authentic assessment and the scoring rubrics for speaking skills used by the teacher in the classroom.

This research was conducted at the junior high school of SMPN 6 Banda Aceh. This school was chosen because it has implemented Curriculum 2013. The result of a preliminary interview with one of the English teachers revealed that this school has fully adopted authentic assessment as the way to measure students' competencies, which are attitude, knowledge, and skill. This school has 680 students and five English teachers. The subject chosen for this study was one of the English teachers and 28 students of class XI-4. The subjects were chosen by using a random sampling technique.

In collecting the data needed for this study, the researchers used observation and document analysis. The observation enabled the researchers to describe existing situations using the five senses, providing a 'written photograph' of the situation under study ([Erlandson et al., 1993](#)). The observation checklist used was adapted from the authentic assessment framework of Curriculum 2013, the types of oral assessment by [O'Malley and Pierce \(1996\)](#), and the types of the oral scoring rubric by [Brown \(2012\)](#). Those types of oral assessment and scoring rubric are appropriate to be used with Curriculum 2013. There were ten aspects observed in the classroom. The aspects include the assessed competencies, types of assessments, and instruments/scoring system. Meanwhile, in document analysis, the researchers collected the data about the recorded scoring rubric.

The duration of the observation was 2 x 45 minutes for three meetings. The researcher focused on the series of activities employed by the teacher in the class. To avoid inaccuracy in analyzing the data from the observation, the researchers also recorded the classroom activities. In document analysis, the researchers studied all the documents collected from the teacher in the form of a syllabus, lesson plan, and scoring rubric.

After collecting the data, the researchers analyzed them in three steps namely the data reduction, the data presentation, and conclusion ([Sutopo, 2002](#)). In reducing the data, the researchers arranged the data in an appropriate order. Next, the researchers chose the relevant data to be interpreted. Lastly, the researchers made a conclusion after interpreting the data.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result from the practice of authentic assessment in the speaking classroom obtained through observation and document analysis is explained in this section. In observation, two objectives were set: (1) understanding the form of narrative text, and (2) producing and presenting orally the narrative text. Table 1 shows sequentially are the types and instruments of authentic assessment used by the teacher to assess speaking skills. In implementing the authentic assessment, the teacher used several types of activities and instruments. The authentic assessment applied by the teacher covers three aspects of competences: attitude assessment, knowledge assessment, and skill assessment.

**Table 1.** Assessed aspects, types of assessment, and instrument forms.

<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Types of Assessment</i>	<i>Instrument Forms</i>
Attitude assessment	Teacher observation	Scoring rubric (analytic type)
Knowledge assessment	Short question and answer	Scoring rubric (analytic type)
	Oral report/presentation	
Skill assessment	Narrating sequence	Scoring rubric (analytic type)

##### 4.1 Attitude Assessment

First is attitude assessment. The data shows that the assessment type used in the attitude assessment was teacher observation. The teacher observed the students' interpersonal and transactional attitudes, both with the teacher and among their peers. In attitude assessment, the teacher took into account the students' behavior including respect, care, honest, discipline, confidence, responsible, teamwork, peace, and cooperation. The process of attitude assessment happened when the students were assigned to work in groups with their peers. After the teacher explained about the topic of the day, she assigned the students to sit in groups. She handed a narrative text entitled the 'Mouse Deer and Crocodile'. The students were asked to discuss the feature of the text: the meaning, social function, structure, and linguistic elements of the text. While students were doing their discussion, she moved from one group to another. She personally approached each student. The teacher silently assessed the students' attitude while they were working and interact in the classroom. She investigated the students' affective aspects while they were working.

The instruments used to assess the students' attitude was an analytic type of rubric. The aspects of students' attitude are labeled on the left side for each of the rows and the scores are labeled on the right side of the rows. The aspects of the students' assessed attitude are respect, care, honest, discipline, confidence, responsible, teamwork, peace, and cooperation. The scores, in this case, are 5 for the highest, 4, 3, 2, and 1 for the lowest.

##### 4.2 Knowledge Assessment

Second is knowledge assessment. In assessing students' knowledge relating to the topic taught, the teacher used short questions and answers. The knowledge assessment was related to students understanding about the topic taught. The topic of observation was narrative text. She taught the students about the structure of the text, linguistic devices, vocabulary, and social function. In assessing the knowledge

assessment for the objectives of that day, she used short questions and answers, and oral presentation.

Firstly, the teacher introduced a sample of narrative text to the students in the form of video entitled 'Partly Cloudy'. The students were asked to watch and analyze the spoken narrative text in the video. After watching the video, she asked several questions to the students. The students who could answer the questions raised their hands. She gave scores for the students who answered the questions correctly. All scores were written in her documentation book. She also threw questions for the students who did not raise their hands. Those students needed assistance in answering the questions. This information was also written in her documentation book. This session lasted for 15 minutes.

After analyzing the narrative text from the video, the teacher asked the students to form groups. She divided the students into seven groups, each group consisted of four students. She handed the students a written narrative text entitled 'Mouse Deer and Crocodile'. Similar to the previous task, the students were asked to analyze the structure of the text, linguistic devices, vocabulary, and social function. They were given ten minutes to discuss their work. After they completed the discussion, she asked the representative of each group to report their discussion result in the classroom. Each group was given three minutes for presenting their final work. In this session, the teacher assessing the students' oral presentation by using the holistic type of scoring rubric. This session lasted for 20 minutes.

In measuring the students' knowledge stance, the teacher also used the analytic scoring rubric. The aspects of students' knowledge are labeled on the left side for each of the rows and the scores are labeled on the right side of the rows. The aspects of the students' assessed knowledge are communicative purposes, text structure, vocabulary, and grammar. The scores, in this case, are 5 for the highest, 4, 3, 2, and 1 for the lowest.

### **4.3 Skill Assessment**

In skill assessment for the observed day, the teacher used narrating sequences activity. When approaching the skill assessment session, she asked the students to sit in the same group. She gave the students a series of pictures and some jumbled sentences. The text was entitled 'The Tortoise and the Hare'. She asked the students to arrange the pictures in the correct order and rearrange the sentences according to the arranged pictures. She instructed the students to write down and remember the story. The students, one by one, would retell the story of the arranged pictures. They were given ten minutes to discuss and remember the story. After that, she gave two minutes for each student to retell the story in front of the class. In this session, she used the analytical form of a scoring rubric. The aspects covered in this assessment are pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, and grammar. Since the time for the lesson finished before all students presented their oral narratives, the teacher asked the remaining ten students to perform in their next meeting before they started the lesson.

The instrument used to assess the students' speaking skill was the analytic scoring rubric. The aspects of students speaking skill are labeled on the left side for each of the rows and the scores are labeled on the right side of the rows. The aspects of the students' speaking skill assessed are pronunciation, intonation, fluency, and accuracy. The scores, in this case, are 5 for the highest, 4, 3, 2, and 1 for the lowest.



## 5. DISCUSSION

The result of the observation reveals the types of authentic assessment used by the teacher in the speaking classroom were teacher observation, short questions and answers, and narrating sequences. The types of activities the teacher employed in the classroom are in line with the oral assessment activities suggested by O'Malley and Pierce (1996).

Particularly, taking into account the speaking skill assessment, the teacher used narrating sequences as the form of the oral report to know the stance of students speaking ability. Sahyoni and Zaim (2017) mention that narrating sequence is one appropriate type of oral assessments to be used in assessing speaking of junior high school students with low English proficiency. In narrating sequences, the teacher scaffolds the students by providing pictures and jumbling sentences. It could assist the students whose vocabulary production were low.

In assessing students' stance of knowledge, the teacher used short questions and answers. Short questions and answers can encourage the students to speak actively and responsively. They can also build students confidence (Sahyoni & Zaim, 2017). Furthermore, in assessing the students' knowledge, the teacher also used the oral report. According to O'Malley and Pierce (1996), the oral report is one of the performance assessment types. In the observed classroom, it was used to assess the students' knowledge. The students used English in reporting their tasks. The way the teacher used oral report can be seen as one of her techniques to develop the students' confidence in performing the speaking skill. Lastly, in assessing the students' attitude, the teacher conducted observation. The observation is needed as the attitude assessment was counted individually. The students had to be approached closely so that their attitude and behavior judgment were more objectives.

Meanwhile, the result of document analysis notes that the teacher used one type of scoring rubric for all types of assessment activities, i.e. the analytic scoring rubric. The analytic scoring rubric was modified according to the types of assessments needed. In using the scoring rubric, the teacher used several criteria. Each criterion was explained accordingly to describe the stance of each students' productive language sample. Brown (2012) said that the analytic rubric can provide multiples scores for different elements of the assessed aspects. Since speaking skills have more language features than the other skills, the analytic rubric can provide the teachers with more information in detail about the aspects that should be improved. It can also provide detail information for the teacher about the students' strengths and weaknesses.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Based on the result of observation and document analysis, it can be concluded that the teacher has conducted an authentic assessment for speaking skills as suggested in Curriculum 2013. The types of authentic assessment activities used are varied. The teacher used teacher observation to assess students' attitude competencies. In assessing the knowledge competencies, the teacher applied two activities, short questions and answers, and oral report/presentation. For skill competence assessment, the teacher used the narrating sequence activity. To measure students' achievement in those varied activities, the teacher uses a single type of scoring rubric i.e. the analytic rubric. The rubric was adjusted with the aspects that were assessed. In short, the authentic

assessment is applicable to be implemented in the English foreign language classroom. Teachers can modify and simplify the types of assessment to fit with the level of the learners.

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